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	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/881,698	TOZAWA ET AL.
Notice of Allowability	Examiner	Art Unit
	Steven D. Maki	1733
The MAILING DATE of this communication appearable claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHT CONTROL of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313	OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this ap or other appropriate communication GHTS. This application is subject to	plication. If not included n will be mailed in due course. THIS
1. \square This communication is responsive to <u>6-24-04</u> .		
2. \boxtimes The allowed claim(s) is/are <u>1,5 and 6</u> .		
3. ☑ The drawings filed on <u>18 June 2001</u> are accepted by the Examiner.		
4.		
Attachment(s) 1. ☑ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08 Paper No./Mail Date 4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material	6. ☐ Interview Summary Paper No./Mail Dat B), 7. ☑ Examiner's Amendr	te

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Examiner's Amendment

1) An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided

by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be

submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

In claim 1:

line 16 before "from 0 to 2 mm" change "arrange" to --a range--

Change title to:

1302.04.

--Pneumatic tire including protrusion dividing groove space of main groove

having groove width narrowed during inflation-

With respect to claim 1, the change of "arrange" to --a range-- so that claim 1 recites "is set in a range from 0 to 2 mm" corrects an obvious typographical error. See MPEP

With respect to the change in the title, see MPEP 606.01.

Reasons for Allowance

2) The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Matsumoto et al (US 6591880 having a filing date between the filing date of this application and the filing date of applicant's foreign priority document) discloses a heavy

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duty tire having main grooves wherein at least two circumferential fine grooves 15, 16 are formed in a circumferential rib 6 defined by two adjoining main circumferential grooves 2, 3. In figure 4, Matsumoto et al shows inclining two of the fine circumferential grooves 15, 16 in opposite directions and offsetting the rib portion 6A radially inwardly. However, Matsumoto et al teaches disposing the rib portion 6A in a circumferential rib 6 defined by two adjoining main circumferential grooves *instead of* a main groove having a groove width narrowed during inflation. Moreover, Matsumoto et al fails to teach dividing the rib portion 6A shown in figure 4 with a slit as claimed.

With respect to Kukimoto and Japan '709 (both already of record), it is emphasized that (1) Kukimoto et al shows respective ones of protrusion sidewalls and groove walls inclining in the same direction but does not show a circumferential slit in the protrusion, (2) Japan '709 shows a circumferential slit in a protrusion but does not show respective ones of the protrusion sidewalls and the both groove walls being oriented parallel and (3) neither Kukimoto et al nor Japan '709 recite main grooves having groove widths which narrow during inflation.

The prior art of record (including Matsumoto et al, the admitted prior art, Kukimoto et al, Montagne, Japan '609 and Japan '709) fails to disclose, teach or suggest a pneumatic tire having main grooves having a groove width narrowed during inflation and inclined groove walls so that the groove width of the main groove becomes wider toward a groove bottom and a protrusion having slanted sidewalls such that respective ones of the pair of protrusion slanted sidewalls and the both groove walls are oriented parallel to each other and "a height difference between said protrusion and said

tread surface is set in a range from 0 to 2 mm, the height of said protrusion is at least 12 mm and a ratio of the height of said protrusion to a groove depth of the main groove is set at 0.8 or higher" and "said protrusion is divided in the tire width direction by a slit formed into the flat top surface towards the groove bottom and extending circumferentially thereabout to form a first divided protrusion section and a second divided protrusion section in facial contact with the first divided protrusion section at the slit".

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

3) Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Steven D. Maki whose telephone number is (571) 272-1221. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. - Fri. 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Blaine Copenheaver can be reached on (571) 272-1156. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Steven D. Maki July 1, 2004

STEVEN D. MAKI RIMARY EXAMINER

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